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TITLE: Design, Synthesis, and Testing of Breast Cancer  
Angiogenesis Inhibitors

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FOREWORD

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**Introduction.** There is a need for alternative approaches to treat metastatic breast cancer. One rapidly developing area of investigation is the study of tumor angiogenesis, the process by which a growing tumor mass recruits the new blood vessels required for its continued growth, and through which the tumor can spread to distant sites. Indeed the neovascularization process is thought to be one of the rate limiting steps for the growth of primary and metastatic tumors.<sup>1-2</sup> Most studies have demonstrated the importance of angiogenesis in the progression of human breast malignancies and found the extent of vascularization to be correlated with tumor size and an indicator of node metastasis.<sup>3-6</sup> Quantitative pathology studies in early breast cancer have shown a worse prognosis for those patients with highly vascular tumors, and similar results were obtained in studies of both node-negative and node-positive breast carcinomas.<sup>5-8</sup> Further, the prognostic influence of tumor angiogenesis was independent of other prognostic indicators.

Several polypeptides and growth factors that are produced by breast cancer epithelial and stromal cells have been identified as having endothelial cell mitogenicity and angiogenic activity: TGF $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  (transforming growth factor), VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor), PD-ECGF (platelet-derived endothelial cell growth factor), FGF (fibroblast growth factor) and TNF $\alpha$  (tumor necrosis factor).<sup>1,9</sup> Our studies are focusing on the angiogenic factor PD-ECGF, based on recent evidence demonstrating its role in experimental and human cancer, and the finding that PD-ECGF is identical to human thymidine phosphorylase (TP), an enzyme that catalyzes the reversible conversion of thymine to thymidine.<sup>10-12</sup> When transfected into NIH 3T3 cells, TP/PD-ECGF was found to increase the vascularization of tumors growing in nude mice after sc inoculation.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, overexpressing TP/PD-ECGF in MCF7 breast carcinoma cells markedly increased tumor growth *in vivo*, although it had no effect on the growth of the cells *in vitro*.<sup>14</sup> Western blot analysis of primary human breast tissue showed that TP/PD-ECGF expression was elevated in the tumors compared to the normal tissue<sup>14</sup>, a finding which provides clinical relevance to the transfection experiments.

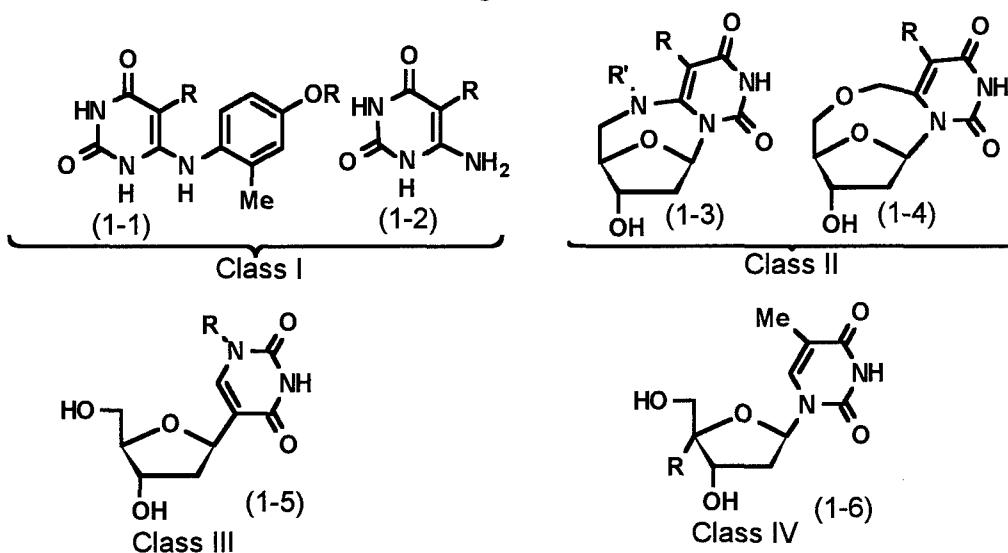
Studies suggest that the angiogenic and endothelial cell chemotactic activities of PD-ECGF are dependent upon its enzymatic activity, and this has been confirmed with site-directed mutagenesis studies.<sup>14,15-17</sup> Of the angiogenic factors identified to date, TP/PD-ECGF is the only one in which an enzymatic activity of the factor is required for angiogenic activity. These observations serve as the basis for our hypothesis that inhibition of the catalytic activity of TP/PD-ECGF will also block its angiogenic properties. By synthesizing inhibitors of TP/PD-ECGF, we will be able to test this hypothesis and provide a basis for the development of a novel class of antitumor agents.

## **PROPRIETARY**

### **Progress in the Synthesis and Evaluation of Target Compounds**

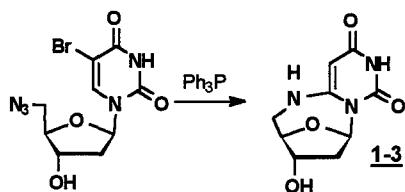
Our original proposal suggested the synthesis of four structurally distinct classes of pyrimidines or pyrimidine nucleosides to be evaluated as potential TP/PD-ECGF inhibitors (I - IV shown in Fig. 1). We reported in last year's progress report significant headway in the synthesis and evaluation of classes I and III. The early portion of this year's efforts has focused therefore on the synthesis of members of the two remaining classes II and IV.

**Fig. 1**



**Figure 1: Classes of compounds to be synthesized and tested as inhibitors of TP/PD-ECGF catalytic activity.**

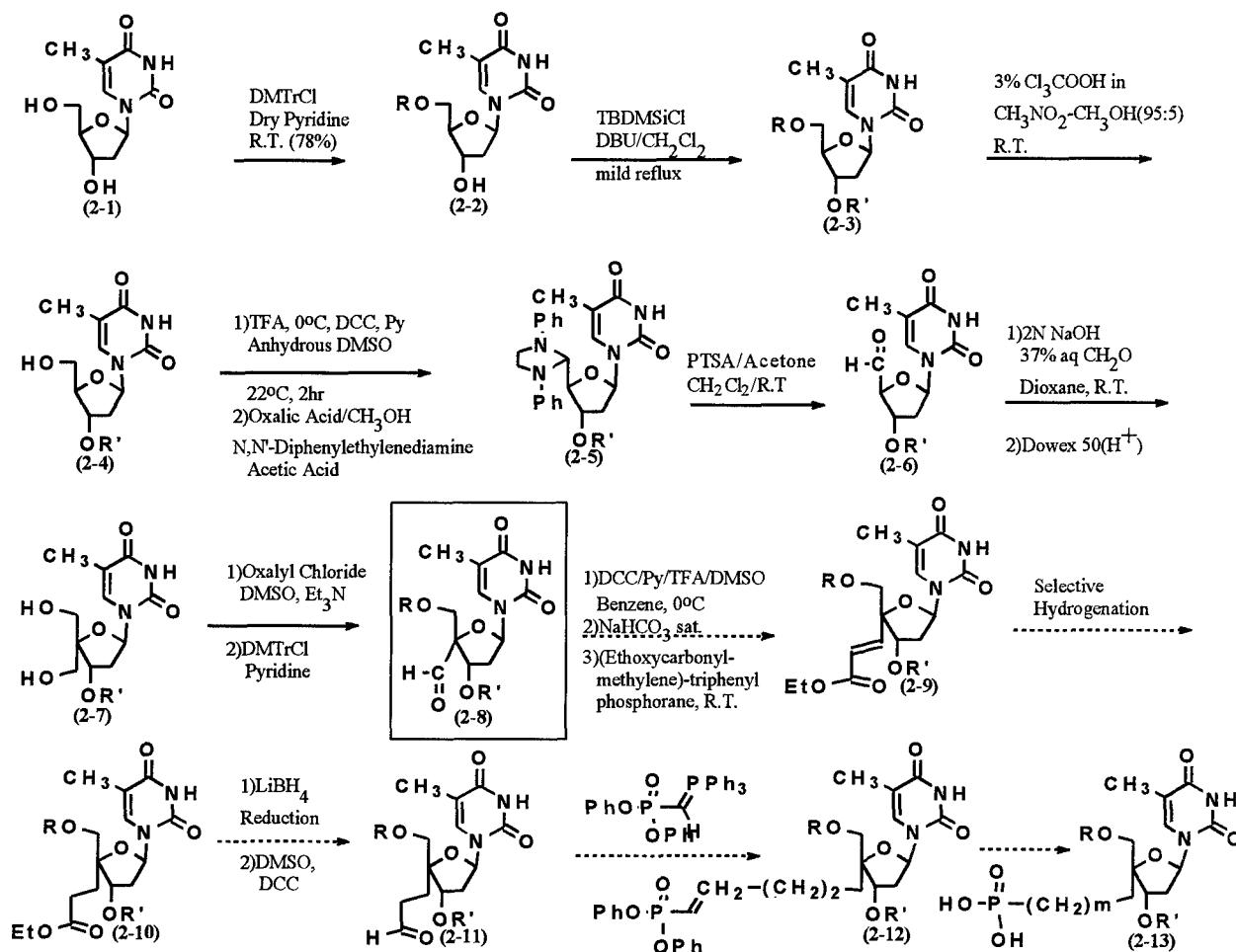
In our investigation of new analogs belonging to class II, we have synthesized key intermediates which are, as illustrated below, only one step removed from target analog 1-3 (where R'=R=H in fig. 1). The remaining step involves a final cyclization via reduction of the azido groups to NH<sub>2</sub> with triphenylphosphine to afford the desired product.



Significant progress has also been achieved in the synthesis of derivatives of class IV (see Fig. 2) where a series of synthetic conversions starting with thymidine (2-1) have resulted, as originally planned, in the synthesis of key intermediate 2-8. The latter should be readily convertible to the desired potential bisubstrate inhibitors 2-13 as shown.

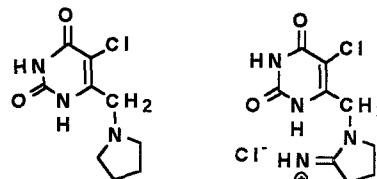
**PROPRIETARY**

**Fig. 2**



**Figure 2: Synthetic route for the synthesis of class IV compounds.**

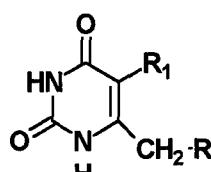
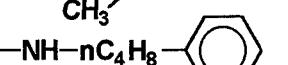
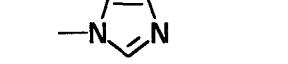
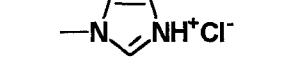
One of the most significant recent developments in the area of TP inhibitors as antiangiogenic agents was the recent report by a Japanese pharmaceutical company (Taiho Pharmaceuticals) of a series of uracil derivatives (shown in figure to right) that had pronounced TP inhibitory activity (18). We have decided to incorporate this important insight into our synthetic chemistry program, and therefore have established a new class of compounds to be evaluated (Class V, see Table 1, below). While somewhat similar to the uracil derivatives of class I we had suggested for investigation, these new analogs differ structurally in one significant respect, the incorporation of a methylene group at C-6 which acts as a bridge between the pyrimidine ring and the amines. We first synthesized three such C-6 methylene-containing amines (**V1**, **V2**, **V3**, Table 1) and determined their activity. All three were



**PROPRIETARY**

poor inhibitors, with  $K_i$  greater than 0.3  $\mu\text{M}$ . Suspecting that this may have been due to the lack of a 5-substitution on the analogs, we next prepared compound **V5** with a 5-Cl to mimic the Taiho compound.

The activity of this compound was 1.5  $\mu\text{M}$ , making it the most potent inhibitor of TP we have synthesized to date, surpassing the activity of our previously synthesized 5-bromo-6-aminouracil ( $K_i = 13 \mu\text{M}$ ) by an order of magnitude. Removal of the 5-Cl moiety (compound **V4**) reduced the  $K_i$  to 120  $\mu\text{M}$ , confirming the importance of this substituent. We also synthesized the HCl salt (**V6**) and found it had equivalent inhibitory activity on TP as did **V5**, thereby providing a readily water soluble analog.

	<u>Compound</u>	<u>R<sub>1</sub></u>	<u>R<sub>2</sub></u>
	V1	H	
	V2	H	
<b>Class V</b>	V3	H	
	V4	H	
	V5	Cl	
	V6	Cl	

**Table 1: Structure of Class V compounds.**

In light of these new developments, we have focused our recent efforts on the synthetic investigation of 5-substituted 6-chloromethyluracils for use as precursors to this new type of TP inhibitors. The results of our work in this area are summarized in Fig. 3. We have selected **3-7** and **3-10** as the two precursors of highest priority and most likely to afford highly active analogs. **3-7** was prepared through the sequence shown starting with the reaction of 2-methyl ethylacetacetate and thiourea. The corresponding 5-Cl derivative **3-10** was obtained originally by chlorination of the commercially available 6-chloromethyluracil **3-11**. In view of its excessive cost, other synthetic approaches to **3-10** have been investigated. We have now prepared it from the more economical and commercially available 6-methyluracil **3-8**. A somewhat longer but possibly better yielding approach should also be possible as shown (**3-8**  $\rightarrow$  **3-12**  $\rightarrow$  **3-13**  $\rightarrow$  **3-14**  $\rightarrow$  **3-10**) which makes use of the same methodology we employed for the 5-Me series. Initial conversions of these precursors to **3-15** and **3-16** have already been carried out.

**PROPRIETARY**

Fig. 3

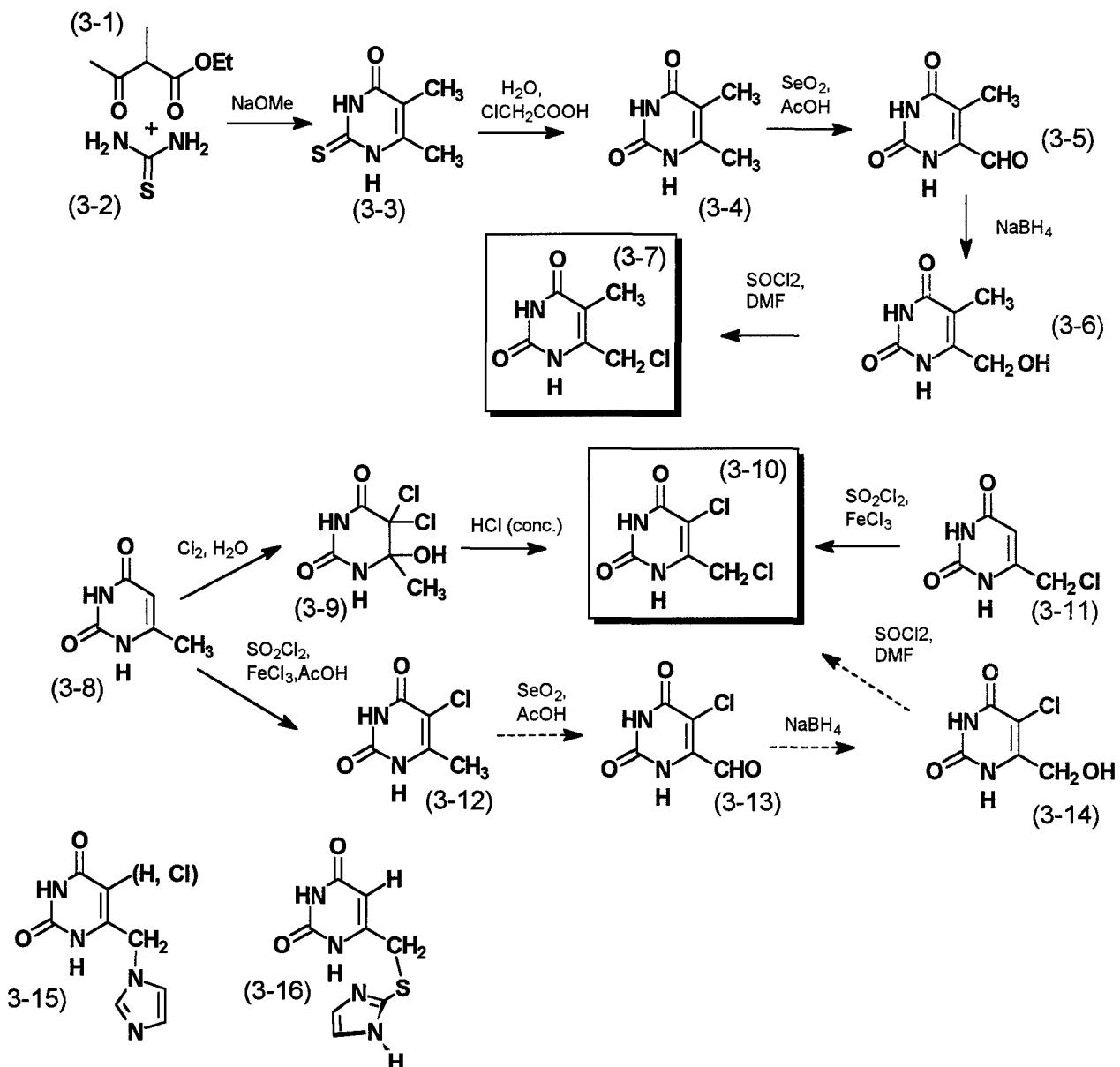


Figure 3: Synthetic routes utilized for obtaining precursors of the new generation of C-6-methylene bridged pyrimidine-to-amino (or amidino or thioimidate) derivatives.

**Conclusion.** Having now identified and synthesized a highly potent inhibitor of TP (i.e. compound **V5**), we will now begin, in the upcoming year, biological testing as described in the grant proposal.

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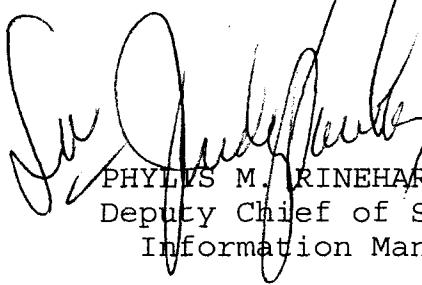
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